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SCOTT C. BONE, Editor.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1909.

Inaugural Messages.

Mr. Taft's inaugural message has at-
tained the rather unusual length of 5,000
words, or nearly four columns of The
Washington Herald. It will occupy nearly
an hour in reading at the inaugural
ceremonies. Doubtless it will be worth
hearing and worth perusal by the even-
ing lamp. This is a day of exhaustive
and exhausting public documents. Mes-
sages, speeches, reports—all are destined
to inordinate proportions. No compiler
or composer has any pride of brevity.

Mr. Roosevelt has been rated a con-
spicuous offender in this regard, for his
public communications excel not only in
length, but in numbers. Yet he can be
concise when he likes, and his inaugural
address contained but a trifle more than
1,000 words. To find a precedent for a
5,000-word inaugural we should have to go
back to the time of Polk, who discoursed
to the extent of 5,500 words.

But six Presidents have exceeded the
4,000-word limit—Monroe, Van Buren, Wil-
liam Henry Harrison, Polk, Benjamin
Harrison, and McKinley. The elder Har-
rison has the championship record for
exhaustive inaugurals, his effort amounting
to 5,800 words, while Washington,
first in everything, holds the palm for
shortness, his second inaugural comprising
but 150 words. But four Presidents
have been briefer than Roosevelt—Wash-
ington, Lincoln, Johnson, and Arthur. We
should like to say that the briefest in-
augurals have been longest remembered,
but this is only partly true. Jefferson's
first inaugural, 1,800 words long, contain-
ing his famous definition of American
policy, and Lincoln's second, 750 words,
with its splendid prophetic dictum, are
probably not familiar to Americans of
this generation.

Of the two inaugurations, the two inaugurals
were not so far apart. And of the two
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that the system is not likely in the future
to become as ineffective as it has been on
occasions in the past. The problem of
efficiency in naval administration is being
solved, even under existing limitations,
and it needs but a strong and sensible
Secretary, like Mr. Newberry, to keep
the machine in fair working order.

Capt. Hobson is evidently firm in the
faith that our fleet could not do it again
without getting into all sorts of trouble.

Gas Legislation—Repeal Act of 1896.

With Congress now in its final stages,
it is to be taken for granted that Chair-
man Gallinger will not press his general
gas measure.

Although offering the basis for satis-
factory and equitable legislation, as we
have repeatedly said, it is so laden with
questionable provisions and framed in
such ambiguous terms as to render its
enactment into law decidedly unsafe. De-
feat would certainly be its portion in its
present form; time is lacking to bring
the Senate and House into accord touch-
ing essential amendments, and it is too
important a measure to be acted upon
precipitantly.

Better no general legislation than ill-
digested and ill-considered legislation
which might tend to increase the burdens
the community is now carrying.

It is within the power of the Senate,
even in these closing hours, to give rel-
ief by passing the simple House bill pro-
viding for cheaper gas, with an amend-
ment placing a restriction upon the per-
centage of carbon monoxide such prod-
uct, after a reasonable period, may con-
tain. In evincing a willingness, even a
keen desire, to supply gas at 30 cents, if
allowed to multiply its capital by many
millions and increase its fixed charges,
the monopoly itself furnishes irrefutable
argument that it can supply gas at a
much reduced rate on its present basis.
But it is clearly the intention of the
Senate committee not to touch the
price or regulate the quality until a re-
organization of the all-powerful utility
concern can be brought about at the
same time. Therefore an adjustment
must wait.

If Senator Gallinger is sincere in seek-
ing a fair and final solution of the vexat-
ious problems—and we do not doubt his
sincerity, though doubting the wisdom of
the plan he proposes—certainly he will
not interpose objection to the repeal of
the section of the act of 1896 under which
the gas companies are endeavoring in the
courts to increase their capitaliza-
tion. The fact that the District Court of
Appeals has ruled adversely on this act
gives ample warrant for its repeal.

Once the gas companies are thus stop-
ped effectually in their pending effort, the
details of legislation for a reorganization,
fair alike to the monopoly and the public,
and providing for cheaper and safer gas,
can be carefully worked out on a
plan that will stand the test of time.
And in the framing of this legislation the
Board of Trade and the Chamber of Com-
merce, through their best legal talent,
should, without delay, lend their assis-
tance and support, to the end that the
public interest may be conserved and
equal and exact justice reached in the
solution.

The repeal of the act of 1896 will be a
decided step forward—a step toward an
honest reorganization and cheaper and
safer gas.

"Writing messages to Congress will
soon be a lost art," says the *Augusta*
Herald, Optimist or pessimist, contempor-
ary?

The little article by which Senator La
Follette was deftly bowled over a few
days ago, in the matter of continuing the
present Senate committees until the regu-
lar assembling of the Sixty-first Congress,
next December, was legitimate enough, in
the light of latter-day Senatorial tradi-
tion, no doubt, but we entertain serious
misgivings that it was of a nature calcu-
lated to raise the existing methods of
Senatorial control in the eyes of the
masses of the people, nevertheless.

It was thoroughly well understood, of
course, that the Wisconsin man intended
interposing his veto, in so far as he
might have been able, to that committee
proposition, and it is not without the
bounds of reasonable speculation, also,
that he might, in a measure at least,
have succeeded in maintaining it. The
fact that a Senator thwarted the plans
of La Follette simply by taking advan-
tage of his temporary absence from the
chamber—it is said he had stepped out to
answer the summons of a card from a
friend in the anteroom—is interesting as
an incident, and perhaps not in violence
of "Senatorial courtesy," so called.

Whatever the precise merits of that
may be in ethics, it will only add
strength to Mr. La Follette's arm ulti-
mately, despite the temporary crippling
it may impose. A man of his character
and determination—to make no mention
of his fighting ability, which must be con-
ceded—cannot be expected to deny him-
self the use of a weapon thus deliber-
ately forged for him. It furnishes him a
specific and convincing exhibit by which
he may prove to the people to their satis-
faction some of the charges he makes on
the floor of the Senate and elsewhere.

We believe that the everyday American
citizen is neither ultraradical nor ultra-
conservative. We think he has plenty of
good red blood in his veins, but that he
is not in need of bleeding for overstruc-
ture, for that. He may no more
favor a full-fledged La Follette regime in
the United States Senate than he at
present seems to fancy the other extreme.
But we do believe that he is inclined
to look askance, and will hardly observe
with favor an apparently somewhat cheap
device whereby Mr. La Follette was
turned down in his effort to do a thing
that he—the everyday American citizen—
would like to have seen aired thoroughly,
to say the least of it.

"Think a little," says the Nashville
American to the Tennessee legislature.
Apparently, that honorable body prefers
to postpone little matters of that per-
sonal until after adjournment.

The English Parliament has replied to
the King's recent speech from the throne.
Contrary to American custom of latter
days, that will not necessarily bring on
more talk.

The New York Globe thinks Jefferson
Davis' name should be restored to that
tablet on Cabin John Bridge, in order

that he may be differentiated from his
"descendant," the junior Senator from
Arkansas. We had hoped this matter
might be adjusted without friction, but
we fear that peevy word "descendant"
will start something pugnacious down
South.

The lately invented crown top for bot-
tles is said to have all but ruined the
corkscrew business. There is something
crooked about this story, plainly enough.

"Can a mule be silenced?" inquires
some one of Poet Paul Cook in the *Birm-
ingham Age-Herald*. There appears to be
no way in which he may be prevented
from registering his kick whenever the
spirit moves him.

"Hampton's Magazine two months ago
called for 'real poetry' in the voice of a
strong man crying in the wilderness. Re-
sult so far: Alfred Austin's 'You and
Us,' says the *Chicago Post*. Probably
Hampton's desires to begin at the bottom
and build upward by easy stages.

Senator Hopkins, of Illinois, seems
fated to be attached to that undesirable
little "ex" in spite of all he can do.

It is quite evident that nothing less
than forty-six summer White Houses will
really satisfy this country.

Mr. Hoke Smith says he will run for
governor of Georgia again "if Joe Brown
runs." "Little Joe," apparently, prefers
to gallop.

Notwithstanding the royal smacks ex-
changed by Edward and William, the
construction of 25,000-ton battle ships will
go merrily forward, it seems.

The umpteenth crisis of the season has
made its appearance in the Balkans. If
it holds out until after the inauguration,
we may find time to take elaborate notice
of it.

The Richmond Journal says Mr. Bryan
is "still far in advance of his time." Per-
haps the Democracy made a mistake in
not postponing Mr. Bryan twenty-five
years or so.

The Prussian crown prince has in-
dicated a desire to visit this country,
provided he can come over "as a private
gentleman might." We assure his
royal highness he may come over in that
manner, without doubt. As to what will
happen to him after he gets here, de-
pendent sayeth not.

"England is building a battle ship that
is to have no funnels," says the Phila-
delphia Ledger. By and by, "Uncle
Andy" Carnegie's dream of the gunless
battle ship may come true!

"Illinois is considering a scheme to
libel unmarried men," says a contem-
porary. Hold on! This libel business may
be carried to an extreme, even in the
promulgation of anti-race suicide ideas.

"Gov. Hughes says his favorite author
is Epictetus," notes the Concord Monitor.
Well, well! And what do you think of
the governor's taste, anyway?

"Chicago is growing faster than New
York," says a Windy City editor. We
fear both of these wayward cities are
faster than they ought to be now.

Atlanta has raised some \$250 with
which to send her soldier boys to Wash-
ington next week. And Atlanta may
take it from us, the show will be cheap
at the price.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDEFINED.

Divided Sovereignty the Cause for
an Uncertain Attitude.

From the Portland Oregonian.

There are several reasons why Ameri-
can foreign policy can as yet be scarcely
called a definable thing. One of them is
the comparative newness of our relations
with the world at large. This recently we
have had little to do with other nations,
and could escape entanglements with
them, but through the events of the past
ten years we have been carried by the
course of events into larger relations with
the affairs of the world, and we cannot
escape the responsibility in which this
policy has placed us. A further reason
why we have no definite foreign policy is
the divided nature of our sovereignty at
home. The States claim sovereignty over
many things that relate to or come in
contact with foreign policy, and especially
with the treatment of aliens in our midst;
and foreign nations can scarcely see why,
when they have made treaties with the
United States, there should be claims of
local sovereignty by various States that
ignore or nullify rights guaranteed by
treaty with our national government.

Truth is, the situation is a "raw" one. A
government of united or divided sov-
ereignty is liable to trouble at home, as
our civil war attested; and to trouble
with other nations, as we find from the
present difficulties with Japan.

Whether the tendency toward greater
unity for the present a matter of opinion
or dispute. Going on in our crude and
clumsy way, we may avoid wars, but we
certainly shall suffer in trade. We are
not yet at the point where our foreign
relations—at one time with Germany, and
at this moment with Japan, over the in-
terpretation of the "most favored nation"
clause; with Cuba about her position under
our protectorate; with the Japanese over
their rights in Hawaii and the Philippines.
We make "a race question," as no other
nation does, in the matter of intercourse
with aliens; and our separate States—
or, rather, the States—do not seem to be
able to settle the matter to the limit. If all
this et cetera the prejudices of other nations
against us and leads to rumors of wars,
as our course is sure to do, then our trade
suffers. But then we are very brave and
very strong, or think we are, and we
must not let considerations like these
stop us from "asserting our rights."

What an opportunity, moreover, for the
patriotic orator!

But it is apparent that our country can-
not have a safe and constant foreign
policy, worth the dignity and pride of a
great nation in the world of affairs, so
long as the States, in the exercise of their
claims of sovereignty, are disposed or
permitted to interfere with it. The out-
come cannot be a failure, for we are not
only because of a high order of civilization.
It is certain we have not yet developed a
consistent constitutional system.

Why We Need the Auditorium.

From the Chicago Record-Herald.

It would seem that local enterprise does
not supply a modern auditorium that
either the inaugural ball will have to
be eliminated or lose its luster or else
continue to be housed in the Pension
building. And the ball has come to be so
much of an institution that the repre-
sentatives of the great American public
who attend inauguration ceremonies
would feel its loss bitterly.

Circumventing the Interests.

From the Kansas City Times.

Mr. Taft's Cabinet appointments thus
far announced include only lawyers. This
may be not so much because Mr. Taft
is not a lawyer as a class, as be-
cause legal talent of a high order is
required to circumvent the able coun-
sel of the "interests" opposed to the ad-
ministration's policies.

A LITTLE NONSENSE.

THE DRAMA.

In silken shoes and ragged dress,
Forlorn she stands.
A peck of diamonds, more or less,
Adorn her hands.

Yet she must needs she doth confess,
In foreign lands.

The canvas grove is dark and vast.
The wintry breeze
Comes whistling in a bitter blast
Through canvas trees.

The paper snow is falling fast
And she will freeze.

And now the wolves are on the run;
We hear their whoops
To yelp and howl have they begun.
In sullen groups.

I understand the trick is done
Outside by supes.

The hero dashes from the wings;
The wolves skidoo.
The leading lady to him clings;
They bill and coo.

We may as well put on our things;
The play is through.

"What's this survival of the fittest?"
"It's this way. Some wimmen git
through the winter in spite of their peck-
aboo clothes."

In Pugilistic Parlayance,
"It was a sad jolt to her when she lost
the duke."
"Well, what did she do?"
"She took the count."

Wifely Hints.
Hints of springtime are a bane.
That is flat.
For they mostly appertain
To a hat.

Real Rain.
"How are these open air perform-
ances?"
"All right, except when Nature insists
on acting as property man."

Something Up.
"What would you do if a man should
come in and offer to subscribe for three
years and pay cash in advance?"
"I'd tell him I couldn't suppress the
story," sighed the country editor.

A Good Scheme.
"I never throw away old junk, for that
would make me feel wasteful."
"Well."
"So," give it away, and feel chari-
table."

NO CAUSE FOR GLOOM.

Tariff Agitation Cannot Injure Busi-
ness for Long.

From the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

It is not that there is danger in the
middle there is only preparation. It has
been often shown that this country can
thrive under any kind of tariff, or un-
der very imperfect laws, if only it have
the chance to adapt itself to their op-
erations. Desiring as it is that Con-
gress shall perform this work of tariff
revision carefully, it is far more impor-
tant that it shall be done promptly,
with such provision for future adapta-
tions as shall put it beyond the muta-
tions of political whim. Until this has
been done, the resumption of preparat-
ing industry, on which all our East-
ern activities are based, must be cau-
tious and slow, even though the agri-
cultural West is already gathering its
riches and offering a market for our
products.

No one can for a moment consider the
actual conditions in this country to-day
without perceiving that all this present
dilemma is but the preparation for a
great activity. We may have been im-
prudent in expecting prosperity to return
at once, but its return is inevitable as
the seasons. So while in this waiting
period we are subject to furies of de-
pression, the man who would be a
"bear" on the future of the United
States, as Mr. Morgan has pertinently
said, is certain to turn up on the wrong
side of the market in the end. If the
people who are subject to stock-market
scars were capable of reasoning, they
would not need to be told that this is
not a time to sell anything that you do
not need to sell. It is a time to buy,
and the country, that need only the
assurance of stable conditions to pro-
duce the healthy resumption of pro-
ductive activity everywhere. Gamblers
may find the profits of speculation in
uncertainty, but the responsible man of
affairs will not be driven from his con-
fidence.

Evils of One-Partyism.

From the *Champion* (N. C.) Observer.

In one way or another nearly every
one-party State presents a spectacle
which may well influence the Maryland
independent. Pennsylvania festers with
reckless corruption; it is not easy to say
whether Northern or Southern brand of
one-partyism is the less desirable. Penn-
sylvania has only the reputation of pre-
posterous high tariff; the South has for a
few years the one only too menacing, but
now everywhere vanished, specter of
negro domination. As Southern States
rise out of their comparative poverty
and the tendency toward corruption
under one-party conditions, which
have been breeding rings, cliques and
close political corporations all these
years, will inevitably become marked
wherever such conditions continue to ex-
ist.

Booming Hinds for Congress.

From the *Leicester* (Me.) Journal.

There is a strong sentiment in Wash-
ington and in Maine's First Congressional
district in support of Asher C. Hinds
to succeed Amos L. Allen as Congressman
from the First district. Hinds was Allen's
parliamentary expert, and he has been
Canon's expert. Hinds' work on
parliamentary precedents is properly
called to be "monumental." No new man
could possibly be so valuable on the floor
of the House as Hinds. Hinds is not
only because of his capable mind, but
because of his large experience in par-
liamentary practice. Mr. Hinds would
at once force to the front and contribute
no little to restore Maine to high position
in the House—always assuming that he
would re-present the district as Allen had
not.

A Lasting Job.

From the *Hopkinton Post*.

Andrew Carnegie announces a gift of
\$50,000 with which to begin moral re-
demption of Pittsburgh. We congratulate
the old Scotchman. He has at last
tackled a job which will enable him to
die poor if he remains on it.

THE HOUSE OF HOSPITALITIES.

Here we brouched the Christmas barrel
And upped the ballet-ends,
Here we sang the Christmas carol
And called in friends.

Time has tired me since we met here,
When the folk were dead and young;
Since the winds were wailing here,
And quiet songs sung.

And the wren has bared the veil
That used to lead the tune,
But struck upon the dial
That struck upon the moon.

Now no Christmas brings in neighbors,
The New Year comes with no pretence;
Where we sang the wren now labors
And spiders hunt.

Yet at midnight, if I walk here
When the moon sheds light and true,
Forms outstage and seem to talk here
And smile on me as of yore.

—Thomas Hardy, in the *New Quarterly*.

WASHINGTON CHAT.

By THE SPECTATOR.

Elliot Gregory, who is in town for the
marriage of his niece, Miss Laura Jack-
son, which will take place March 6,
is well known in the artistic and literary
circles of both New York and Paris. In
the latter city, indeed, he gained most
of his training as a painter, having
studied there with Carolus Duran and
Cabanel, as any one who has seen his
work would be able to divine, since it
suggests both of these masters, and has
the strength and character of Duran with
the delicate coloring and sensitive hand-
ling of Cabanel. The best known of his
portraits is that of Ada Rehan, which
may prefer to the famous canvas of that
actress by Sargent. Mr. Gregory has not
devoted himself alone to his brush, which
earned him an honorable mention in the
Paris Salon, but is a writer as well, and
has contributed some charming papers to
the literature of the day under the
pseudonym of "The Idler," the best
known of which are "Worldly Ways and
By Ways." This was at the head of
long been classed among the young
American artists that it is difficult to
realize he is fast approaching sixty, but
his enthusiasm still remains